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FOR AF AND NEA/ELA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EG](#) [SU](#) [SO](#)  
SUBJECT: A/S FRAZER PRESSES EGYPT ON SUDAN, SOMALIA

Classified by Minister Counselor for Economic and Political  
Affairs William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer met with her MFA counterpart, Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs Shamel Nasser, on November 25, to discuss Sudan and Somalia. Nasser argued that the security situation in Somalia had been better under the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) prior to the arrival of the Ethiopians, while A/S Frazer pushed back firmly that the security situation in Somalia had not been good for many years prior to the Ethiopians, and the ICU was the source of instability, not security. On Sudan, with Nasser arguing that a more low-key, less aggressive approach would work better with Bashir, while A/S Frazer made the point strongly that the GoS does respond to pressure, but then reneges on commitments it makes after the pressure is reduced. End summary.

¶2. (C) On November 25, AF Assistant Secretary Frazer met with Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs Shamel Nasser at the Foreign Ministry. (Note: Nasser was joined by Deputy Assistant Minister for Sudan and East Africa, Abdel Hamid Marzouk; Cabinet Advisor for African Affairs, Ahmed Abu Zeid; Chef de Cabinet of the Deputy Foreign Minister and Coordinator for African Affairs, Counselor Hisham Qadry; and MFA Director of African Organizations, Counselor Maged Nafaa. A/S Frazer was joined by Special Assistant Fatuma Sanneh, CAO Helen Lovejoy, and ECPO Min-Couns William Stewart, as notetaker. End note.) Their hour-long meeting focused on recent events in Sudan and Somalia. Concerning Sudan's north/south conflict, A/S Frazer said the U.S. is in the complex position of seeking dialogue with the Government of Sudan while at the same time enforcing sanctions. However, she said there are no additional sanctions envisioned at this time. A/S Frazer noted Sudanese president Bashir's habit of apparently bowing to external pressure to change his behavior, only to renege and revert to his previous actions once the external pressure was removed.

¶3. (C) Assistant Minister Nasser said that Egypt sees things in Sudan largely the same way as the U.S. "We are not happy with what is happening in Sudan." Egypt agrees with the U.S. and others that the situation in Sudan "must change." However, Egypt believes the best way to effect change in Sudan is not through external pressure or sanctions, but through dialogue. "We talk to the Sudanese and try to persuade them to change and become more responsive to the international community." The problem, he opined, was that when Darfur moved to the center of the international community's agenda, it took attention away from the CPA and the north-south conflict. Unfortunately, the north-south conflict is far from being resolved. "It is even less secure than Darfur. We face serious problems in implementing the CPA." Egypt hopes that in the upcoming referendum, the Sudanese will choose to stay united. If not, he said, and a

process of fragmentation begins, "no one can say where it will end. It could lead to a catastrophe."

14. (C) A/S Frazer said that the issues in Sudan are complex and interrelated. She disagreed that the U.S. somehow took its eye off the north-south conflict and became preoccupied with Darfur. She underscored that for the U.S., "the north-south conflict is core." We believe in the unity of Sudan. One of the points of conflict is oil. The north-south conflict is more about what is under the land than what is on its surface. The failure to implement the Abyei Protocol has hampered implementation of the CPA. During his recent visit to Washington, SPLM leader and First Vice President Salva Kiir said he would not return to the cabinet until Abyei is addressed. Nonetheless, A/S Frazer said it was clear that there was no decision by the south to secede from Sudan at this time. The U.S. wanted the southerners to return to the government, but it was clear they would not do so until Abyei is addressed.

15. (C) Turning to Darfur, Nasser said that Egypt had been deeply disappointed by the refusal of the UN to accept Egyptian peacekeepers for Darfur. The hybrid force, he noted, was supposed to be predominantly African, yet the UN rejected Egyptians and tried to force northern Europeans and Thais on Sudan. Such an attitude, Nasser averred, only serves to enhance Sudanese paranoia that the international community has a "hidden agenda" for Sudan. "This attitude of the UN is unhelpful." Director for Sudan Affairs Wael Aboul Zeit added that the key was to foster better dialogue between the NCP and the SPLM, and to encourage moderates on both sides while isolating hardliners. Aboul Zeit said that Egypt is hosting a meeting on Darfur in Sharm el-Sheikh on December 4th which will seek to find common ground between the Sudanese factions. "We sense the Juba process is not going

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well," Aboul Zeit said. We feel we need an "Arusha II,8 and have been talking with a Group of Four (Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, and Chad) on how to move forward in Sudan.

16. (C) Responding to Nasser's comments on peacekeepers, A/S Frazer noted that the agreement had talked about peacekeepers in Sudan being made up of a preponderance of African troops -- not solely by them. The AMIS African troops are perceived as corrupt and discredited by many of the local people in Darfur. They reject AMIS as collaborating with the Sudan Government and as unable to protect them. The problem now, A/S Frazer continued, is that we are reaching a difficult situation if even the local people have a veto over who the UN can send as peacekeepers. The other problem is backtracking by Bashir who is using this situation to delay the deployment of desperately needed peacekeepers. Also, Eritrea, Libya, and Chad are sponsoring the rebels, and are in fact liable to sanctions themselves.

17. (C) Turning to Somalia, Nasser said the situation there was "very bad," with no prospect for a political settlement in the near future. Egypt was very disappointed with Ethiopia. "When they (the Ethiopians) invaded Somalia last year, they told us it would only be a matter of weeks. That was nearly a year ago." Now, Nasser continued, the Ethiopians tell us they cannot pull out, or else they would leave a security vacuum that the Islamic Courts Union would return to fill. The key, Nasser asserted, was a genuine political process that included all factions. "It is hard to see how we can achieve a lasting solution in Somalia if we exclude all former members of the ICU from talks." Egypt favors a greater role in Somalia for the AU, Nasser added. "It would also be good if the UN stepped in."

18. (C) A/S Frazer underscored strongly that the former members of the ICU "excluded themselves." The problem, she explained, is that they refuse to participate until the Ethiopians leave. "We didn't like the ICU, but what they brought was stability," Nasser said. "The Ethiopians have

triggered the violence." A/S Frazer disagreed vigorously; it was the ICU that was directly responsible for the violence. Nonetheless, Nasser stressed, there are rising pressures in Egypt and throughout the Arab world to "do something" about Somalia. These feelings are fed by pictures and stories of Somali women and children being killed by the Ethiopians. One way to take concrete action in this regard, A/S Frazer noted, would be to strongly support AMISOM. No country will send troops to Somalia, Nasser opined, if there is no hope of a political settlement.

¶9. (C) A/S Frazer said that Saudi Arabia was playing a constructive role in Somalia by offering to help the TFG and we should approach them about helping to finance a multi-national peacekeeping force there. Djibouti might also be able to play a useful role. While the U.S. is prepared to talk with "almost anyone" about how to make progress in Somalia, we feel the Ethiopians must not leave until someone else can effectively step in and provide security. The U.S. would be happy to see an Arab/Africa/Islamic force, A/S Frazer said. Nasser agreed, adding that a force made up of such troops would be much more likely to be accepted by the Somalis themselves. However, he warned, any force that goes to Somalia, must go with a political process in place, with a "clear exit strategy."

¶10. (C) Turning to relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, A/S Frazer said she foresaw continuing tensions between them on their disputed border, but discounted any possibility of armed conflict in the near future. However, a terrorist attack or other incident could spark a wider conflict, and that is something for us all to be concerned about. Nasser agreed: "Ethiopia cannot afford a war with Eritrea while it is still in Somalia." The chance of a "small clash," however, is great -- "in some places the Ethiopians and Eritreans are only 70 meters apart."

¶11. (U) A/S Frazer has cleared this cable.  
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